

CORRESPONDENCE

SIR,—In his book *ESP: A Scientific Evaluation*, Professor Hansel, in discussing the motive experimenters might have for fraud, makes the following statement: 'The Soal-Goldney experiment gained Soal his Doctorate of Science at London University. Would that degree have been given for a series of negative experiments?'

This injurious statement is based on conjecture since Professor Hansel was not an examiner. In fact, the first statement is incorrect; the answer to the question is 'Yes' (provided, of course, these experiments fulfilled the requirements of the degree).

That the first statement is incorrect would be apparent to anyone who knows the London University regulations for higher degrees which require evidence of continued research. A D.Sc. could not have been awarded on a single investigation, nor could it have been awarded on the sole evidence of an investigation carried out in collaboration with someone else. The degree was, in fact, awarded on a number of investigations (mostly negative in results) which included also the Soal-Goldney positive results. The examiners did not single out the Soal-Goldney results for commendation. I cannot speak for the other examiner (who is now dead) but, in my opinion, the other researches submitted would have been adequate for the award of a D.Sc. if the work with Shackleton had not been included.

The implication of the final question that a degree would not have been awarded for negative results is absurd. The business of the examiners is to examine the quality of the work submitted including the logic of its conclusions, not to ask themselves whether they agree with the conclusions.

Nor is there any ground for supposing that Soal would have expected the examiners to be biased in favour of positive results. He might more reasonably have feared that prejudice against the paranormal might have led his examiners or the examining board to turn down a research report which included a claim which has been subject to much derision. Prudence might have led him to omit the Soal-Goldney report from those entered for his degree.

I have the permission of the Academic Registrar of London University to make these facts public. He confirms that the Soal-Goldney experiments were only part of the work submitted

and that the examiners did not make specific reference to the Soal-Goldney experiments but assessed the quality and original contributions of the whole of the work submitted.

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OBITUARY

THE HON. MRS CYRIL GAY

Kathleen Gay was born on 22nd June, 1890, the eldest daughter of Lord Robson who was successively Solicitor and Attorney General in Asquith's government. She married Colonel Cyril Gay, who died in 1949, and she herself died on 8th December, 1968, after six years of crippling and depressing illness, borne with the utmost courage. I first made friends with her when we found ourselves together on the Council of the S.P.R., but so absorbed were we in our common interest that we spoke little of her life outside, and I have asked her sister, Lady Clay, for a few notes about it. She writes as follows: 'Kathleen was a person of wide and varied interests. All her life she gave up much of her spare time to doing voluntary social work. During World War I she worked for the Red Cross and during World War II for the Soldiers and Sailors Families' Association. She had a genius for friendship, particularly with the young, and her sympathy and understanding won the devotion of all her nephews and nieces and great nephews and nieces of all ages. She is missed by a wide circle of friends of every age and in all walks of life.'

Mrs Gay's interest became focussed on psychical research in the 1930s when she met George Tyrrell. Their friendship gave her an insight into the qualities needed by a good researcher: a cool head, a warm heart, an eye for the unexpected, and the patience to record all data with methodical accuracy. She was made for the work, with a first class brain inherited from her father and a gentle understanding which disarmed even the mediums who expected every investigator from the S.P.R. to be an ogre. But sympathetic as she was with honest mediums, she was not easily fooled by frauds. I once found her immensely amused after an interview with a man and his wife who had asked for the wife's gift for obtaining messages by means of raps to be investigated. Soon in a darkened room the raps duly began and it occurred to Mrs Gay,